

Home Alone, 1991—Two men try to murder a small child (Comedy)

This holiday hit contains all the favourite tropes of the classic Christmas motion picture: trauma formation, sadism, and crimes against humanity.

We start with our hero, eight-year-old Kevin McCallister, suffering emotional abuse at the hands of his implausibly large and inattentive family. They are preparing for a vacation paid for in its entirety by the government of some prosperous and possibly oil-rich country (this latter fact we deduce by observing the disregard for the financial constraints of such a trip—pizzas are ordered by the dozen, one child drinks Pepsi cola by the glassful without even asking his parents first, nobody is even stressing about getting to the airport on time). After wishing death on his family, young Kevin is condemned to sleeping in the attic where he is cold and alone while the family enjoy pizza and company at this special time of year.

But things get even funnier: a mishap with local power lines combined with said family's disregard for planning and co-ordination as a result of their ingratitude means that every single member—even the old man, who in the film's most notorious plot hole isn't up at 5am moaning about how lazy everyone else is—oversleeps. In the subsequent rush, they remember to grab all the important stuff: tickets, passports, bags, one member even thankfully remembers to bring their yoyo. But not Kevin! Kevin's existence is humorously forgotten by his entire extended family. He awakes after the rush and is overjoyed to discover what he believes has been the success of his death spell.

Wacky antics ensue. An opportunistic pair of local criminals attempt to burglarise the house but are briefly deterred when they discover it not to be as unoccupied as they thought. Young Kevin's stay in paradise has been upset. In a contemporary retelling of the Icarus myth, the burglars' unchecked ambition is such that they opt not simply to burglarise a different house, but aim instead to eradicate the child in order to get hold of the treasure-trove of booty he must surely be guarding.

Young Kevin remembers all the lessons his elders have taught him about safety and not talking to strangers, and with one part pep, one part skill and one part elbow grease cheerily sets about rolling his sleeves up to transform the McCallister abode into a chamber of punishment. The chamber of punishment has but one aim—to devastate as much of the suffering Kevin has developed a taste for upon his aggressors in efficient a manner as possible. And the suffering is exquisite: there is body horror, there is arson, there is psychological torture, and young Kevin drinks it up with all the glee of his cousin enjoying many glasses of free oil-funded Pepsi cola.

Luke Madams

We conclude with our hero captured. About to be dismembered while fully conscious by the boneheaded criminals (in direct contravention of the Geneva convention), a suspected local serial killer appears and inflicts potentially fatal head trauma upon the captors. This reverses the death spell, Kevin's family reappear, and everybody gets to celebrate Christmas after all. Everybody, that is, except the criminals, who can hope to meet only Rudolf the red-nosed *pain* deer this holiday season!